Scriptural Chriſtianity:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

AUGUST 24, 1744.

AT

St. MARY's CHURCH in OXFORD,

BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY.

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"Whoſoever heareth the ſound of the trumpet, and "taketh not warning, if the ſword come and take "him away, his blood ſhall be upon his own "head." Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

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TO THE

READER.

IT was not my Deſign, when I wrote, ever to print the latter Part of the following Sermon: But the falſe and ſcurrilous Accounts of it which have been publiſhed, almoſt in every Corner of the Nation, conſtrain me to publiſh the Whole, juſt as it was preached, that men of Reaſon may judge for themſelves.

OCTOBER 20,
1744.

JOHN WESLEY

ACTS IV. 31.

"And they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST."

1. THE ſame expreſſion occurs in the ſecond chapter, where we read, "When the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all" (the Apoſtles, with the women, and the mother of Jeſus, and his Brethren,) "with one accord in one place. And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt*." One immediate effect whereof was, "They began to ſpeak with other tongues†" inſomuch that both the "Parthians, Medes, Elamites," and the other ſtrangers who "came together, when this was noiſed abroad, heard them ſpeak in (their ſeveral) tongues, the wonderful works of GOD.‡"

2. In this chapter we read, that when the Apoſtles and brethren had been praying and praiſing God, "the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt§." Not that we find any viſible appearance here, ſuch as had been in the former inſtance: Nor are we informed that the *extraordinary gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, were then given to all or any of them; ſuch as *the gifts of healing, of working other miracles, of prophecy, of diſcerning ſpirits*; the ſpeaking with *divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues*‖.

3. Whether theſe gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were deſigned to remain in the Church throughout all Ages; and whether or no they will be reſtored at the nearer approach of the *Reſtitution of all things*, are queſtions which it is not needful to decide. But it is needful to obſerve this, That even in the infancy

* Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ver. 6. § Acts iv. 31.
‖ 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

of the Church, God divided them with a ſparing hand. *Were all* even then *Prophets? Were all workers of Miracles? Had all the gifts of Healing? Did all ſpeak with Tongues?* No, in no wiſe. Perhaps not one in a thouſand. Probably none but the teachers in the Church, and only ſome of them*. It was therefore for a more excellent purpoſe than this, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt."

4. It was, to give them (what none can deny to be eſſential to all Chriſtians in all ages) *the mind which was in Chriſt*, thoſe holy *fruits of the Spirit*, which, whoſoever hath not, *is none of His;* To fill them with †"Love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs:" To endue them with *Faith*, (perhaps it might be rendered *fidelity*) with *meekneſs and temperance*: To enable them to "crucify the fleſh with its affections and luſts," its paſſions and deſires; and, in conſequence of that *inward change*, to fulfil all *outward* righteouſneſs, "to walk as Chriſt alſo walked, in the ‡ work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love."

5. Without buſying ourſelves then in curious, needleſs enquiries, touching thoſe *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer view of theſe his *ordinary* fruits: which we are aſſured will remain throughout all ages: Of that great work of GOD among the children of men, which we are uſed to expreſs by one word, *Chriſtianity*: Not as it implies a ſet of opinions, a ſyſtem of doctrines, but as it refers to men's hearts and lives. And this *Chriſtianity* it may be uſeful to conſider under three diſtinct views.

I. As beginning to exiſt in individuals.

II. As ſpreading from one to another.

III. As covering the earth. I deſign to cloſe theſe conſiderations with a plain practical application.

I. And firſt, let us conſider Chriſtianity in its riſe, as beginning to exiſt in individuals.

Suppoſe then, one of thoſe who heard the Apoſtle Peter preaching *repentance and remiſſion of ſins*, was *pricked to the heart*, was convinced of ſin, repented and then *believed in Jeſus*. By this *Faith of the ope-*

* 1. Cor. xii. 28, 29, 30. † Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. ‡ 1 Theſſ. i. 3.

ration

ration of God, which was the very *ſubſtance of things hoped for*, * the demonſtrative *evidence of inviſible things*, he inſtantly "received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he [now] cried Abba, Father!" ‡‡ Now firſt it was that he could "call Jeſus, Lord, by the Holy Ghoſt" †, "the Spirit itſelf bearing witneſs with his Spirit that he was a child of God‡" Now it was that he could truly ſay, "I live not, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himſelf for me §"

2. This then, was the very eſſence of his faith, a divine ἔλεγχος ‖ of the love of God the Father, thro' the Son of his love, to him a ſinner, now *accepted in the Beloved*. And ** "being juſtified by faith, he had peace with God, yea the peace of God ruling in his heart:" A peace, which *paſſing all underſtanding*, (πασλα νῶν, all barely rational conception) *kept his heart and mind* from all doubt and fear, through the *knowledge of him in whom he had believed*. He could not therefore *be afraid of any evil tidings*; for his *heart ſtood faſt believing in the Lord*. He feared not what man could do unto him, knowing *the very hairs of his head were all numbered*. He feared not all the powers of darkneſs, whom God was daily *bruiſing under his feet*. Leaſt of all was he afraid to die; nay, he "deſired to depart and be with Chriſt"††:" who §§ through death had deſtroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime, [till then,] ſubject to bondage."

3. "His ſoul therefore magnified the Lord, and his ſpirit rejoiced in God, his Saviour. He rejoiced in him with joy unſpeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: In whom he had Redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins." He rejoiced in that "Witneſs of God's Spirit with his Spirit, that he was a child of God:" And more abundantly, "in hope of the glory of God," in hope of the glorious image of God, the full "renewal of his ſoul in righteouſneſs and true holineſs;"

* Heb. xi. 1. ‡‡ Rom. viii. 15. † 1 Cor. xii. 3. ‡ Rom. viii. 15. § Gal. ii. 20. ‖ Evidence or Conviction. ** Rom. v. 1. †† Phil. i. 23. §§ Heb. ii. 15.

and in hope of that *crown of glory*, that "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

4. "*The love of God* was alſo *ſhed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghoſt which was given unto him.** Becauſe he was a Son, God had ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, Father†*" And that filial love of God was continually increaſed by the "*Witneſs he had in himſelf ‡*," of God's pardoning love to him, "by beholding what manner of love it was, which the Father had beſtowed upon him, that he ſhould be called a child of God §" So that God was the deſire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart; his portion in time and in eternity.

5. He that thus *loved God*, could not but "love his brother alſo;" and "not in words only, but in deed and in truth." "If God, ſaid he, ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another ‖." Yea, every ſoul of man, as the "Mercy of God is over all his works."** Agreeably hereto, the affections of this lover of God, embraced all mankind for his ſake; not excepting thoſe whom he had never ſeen in the fleſh, or thoſe of whom he knew nothing more than that they were *the offſpring of God*, for whoſe ſouls his Son had died; not excepting the *evil* and *unthankful*, and leaſt of all his enemies, thoſe who *hated, or deſpitefully uſed* him for his Maſter's ſake. Theſe had a peculiar place both in his heart and his prayers. He loved them *even as Chriſt loved us*.

6. And "Love is not puffed up"††. It abaſes to the duſt every ſoul wherein it dwells. Accordingly he was *lowly of heart*, little, mean, and vile in his own eyes. He neither ſought nor received the "Praiſe of men, but that which cometh of God only." He was meek and long-ſuffering, gentle to all, and eaſy to be entreated. Faithfulneſs and truth never forſook him; they were "bound about his neck, and wrote on the table of his heart." By the ſame Spirit he was enabled to be "temperate in all things, refraining his ſoul even as a weaned child." He was "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him;" Superior to "the deſire of the

* Rom. v. 5. † Gal. iv. 6. ‡ 1 John v. 10. § 1 John iii. 1.
‖ 1 John iv. 11. ** Pſal. cxlv 9. †† 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

fleſh,

flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." By the same almighty love was he saved, both from passion and pride, from lust and vanity, from ambition and covetousness, and from every temper which was not in Christ.

7. It may be easily believed, he who had this love in his heart, would "work no evil to his neighbour." It was impossible for him, knowingly and designedly to do harm to any man. He was at the greatest distance from cruelty and wrong, from any unjust or unkind action. With the same care did he "set a watch before his mouth, and keep the door of his lips;" lest he should offend in tongue, either against justice, or against mercy or truth. He *put away all lying*, falshood and fraud; neither was *guile found in his mouth*. He *spake evil of no man*; nor did an unkind word ever come out of his lips.

8. And as he was deeply sensible of the truth of that word, *without me ye can do nothing*, and consequently of the need he had to be *watered* of God *every moment*; so he *continued daily* in all the ordinances of God, the stated channels of his Grace to man; *in the Apostle's doctrine* or teaching, receiving that food of the soul with all readiness of heart, *in the breaking of bread*, which he found to be *the communion of the body of Christ*, and *in the prayers* and praises offered up by the great congregation. And thus he daily *grew in grace*, increasing in strength, and in the knowledge and love of God.

9. But it did not satisfy him, barely to abstain from doing evil. His soul was athirst to do good. The language of his heart continually was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." My Lord *went about doing good*; and shall not I *tread in his steps?* As he *had opportunity*, therefore, if he could do no good of a higher kind, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, helped the fatherless or stranger, visited and assisted them that were sick or in prison. He *gave his goods to feed the poor*. He rejoiced to labour or to suffer for them; and wherein soever he might profit another, there especially to *deny himself*. He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembring the word of his Lord, "In-

ſomuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me *."

10. Such was *Chriſtianity* in its riſe. Such was a Chriſtian in ancient days. Such was every one of thoſe, who when they heard the threatnings of the chief prieſts and elders, "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt." "The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one ſoul." (So did the love of Him in whom they had believed, conſtrain them to love one another.) "Neither ſaid any of them that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own; but they had all things common." So fully were they crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them. "And they continued ſtedfaſtly with one accord in the Apoſtle's doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. And great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: For as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, and laid them down at the Apoſtle's feet; and diſtribution was made unto every man, according as he had need †"

II. 1. Let us take a view, in the ſecond place, of this *Chriſtianity*, as ſpreading from one to another, and ſo gradually making its way into the world. For ſuch was the Will of God concerning it, who "did not light a candle to put it under a buſhel, but that it might give light to all that were in the houſe." And this our Lord had declared to his firſt diſciples, "Ye are the ſalt of the earth, the light of the world;" at the ſame time that he gave that general command, "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven ‡."

2. And indeed, ſuppoſing a few of theſe lovers of mankind, to ſee "the whole world lying in wickedneſs;" Can we believe they would be unconcerned at the ſight, at the miſery of thoſe for whom their Lord died? Would not their bowels yearn over them, and their hearts melt away for

* Matt. xxv. 40. † Acts iv. 31. 35. ‡ Matt. v. 13.—16.

very

very trouble? Could they then ſtand idle all the day long, even were there no command from him whom they loved? Rather would they not labour, by all poſſible means, to pluck ſome of theſe brands out of the burning? Undoubtedly they would: They would ſpare no pains to bring back whomſoever they could of thoſe poor ſheep that had gone aſtray, to the great Shepherd and Biſhop of their ſouls*.

3. So the Chriſtians of old did. They laboured, having opportunity, † to do good unto all men, warning them to flee from the wrath to come: now, now, to eſcape the damnation of hell. They declared, ‡ "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all men every where to repent." They cried aloud, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin §." They ‖ *reaſoned* with them *of temperance and righteouſneſs*, or juſtice, of the virtues oppoſite to their reigning ſins, and *of judgment to come*, of the wrath of God which would ſurely be executed on evil doers in that day when he ſhould judge the world.

4. They endeavoured herein to ſpeak to every man ſeverally as he had need. To the careleſs, to thoſe who lay unconcerned in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, they thundered, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt! ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light:" But to thoſe who were already awakened out of ſleep, and groaning under a ſenſe of the wrath of God, their language was, "We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the propitiation for our ſins." Mean time thoſe who had believed, they "provoked to love and to good works; to patient continuance in well-doing; and to abound more and more in that holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord**."

5. And their labour was not in vain in the Lord. His word ran and was glorified. It grew mightily and prevailed. But ſo much the more did offences prevail alſo. The world in general were offended, "becauſe they teſtified of it, that the works thereof were evil ‡‡." The men of pleaſure were offended,

* 1 Pet. ii. 25. † Gal. vi. 10. ‡ Acts xvii. 30. § Ezek. xviii. 30. ‖ Acts xxiv. 25. ** Heb. xii. 14. ‡‡ John vii. 7.

not

not only becauſe theſe men were *made*, as it were, "to reprove their thoughts. (He profeſſeth, ſaid they, to have the knowledge of God: He calleth himſelf the child of the Lord: His life is not like other men's; his ways are of another faſhion: He abſtaineth from our ways, as from filthineſs: He maketh his boaſt, that God is his Father*.)" But much more, becauſe ſo many of their companions were taken away, and would no more "run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot†." The men of reputation were offended, becauſe, as the goſpel ſpread, they declined in the eſteem of the people; and becauſe many no longer dared to "give them flattering titles," or to pay them the homage due to God only. The men of trade called one another together, and ſaid, ‡ "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. But ye ſee and hear that theſe men have perſuaded and turned away much people. So that this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought." Above all, the men of religion, ſo called, the men of *outſide* religion, "the ſaints of the world," were offended, and ready at every opportunity to cry out, § "Men of Iſrael, Help! We have found theſe men! Peſtilent fellows, movers of ſedition throughout the world. ‖ Theſe are the men that teach all men, every where, againſt the people and againſt the law."

6. Thus it was that the heavens grew black with clouds, and the ſtorm gathered amain. For the more Chriſtianity ſpread, *the more hurt was done*, in the account of thoſe who received it not; and the number increaſed of thoſe who were more and more enraged at theſe ** "Men who [thus] turned the world upſide down;" inſomuch, they more and more cried out, "Away with ſuch fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they ſhould live;" yea, and ſincerely believed, that "whoſoever ſhould kill them would do God ſervice."

7 Mean while they did not fail to †† "caſt out their name as evil:" So that this ‡‡ "Sect was every where ſpoken againſt." §§ "Men ſaid all

* Wiſd. i. 13, 14, 15. 16. † 1 Pet. iv. 4. ‡ Acts xix. 25, &c. § Acts xxiv. 5. ‖ Acts xxi. 28. ** Acts xvii. 6. †† Luke vi. 22. ‡‡ Acts xxviii. 22. §§ Matt. v. 11.

manner

manner of evil of them," even as had been done of the "Prophets that were before them." And whatſoever any would affirm, others would believe. So that offences grew as the ſtars of heaven for multitude. And hence aroſe, at the time fore-ordained of the Father, perſecution in all its forms. Some, for a ſeaſon, ſuffered only ſhame and reproach; ſome, "the ſpoiling of their goods; ſome had trial of mocking and ſcourging; ſome of bonds and impriſonment; and others reſiſted unto blood*."

8. Now it was, that the pillars of hell were ſhaken, and the kingdom of God ſpread more and more. Sinners were every where "turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan unto God." He gave his children "ſuch a mouth, and ſuch wiſdom, as all their adverſaries could not reſiſt." And their lives were of equal force with their words. But, above all, their ſufferings ſpake to all the world. They "approved themſelves the ſervants of God, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes; in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours; in perils in the ſea, in perils in the wilderneſs; in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in hunger and thirſt, in cold and nakedneſs†." And when having "fought the good fight," they were "led as ſheep to the ſlaughter, and offered up on the ſacrifice and ſervice of their faith," then the blood of each found a voice, and the heathen owned, "He being dead, yet ſpeaketh."

9. Thus did Chriſtianity ſpread itſelf in the earth. But how ſoon did the tares appear with the wheat? And the *myſtery of iniquity* work as well as the *myſtery of godlineſs*! How ſoon did ſatan find a ſeat, even *in the temple of God!* Till "the woman fled into the wilderneſs, and the faithful were again miniſhed from the children of men." Here we tread a beaten path: The ſtill increaſing corruptions of the ſucceeding generations, have been largely deſcribed from time to time, by thoſe witneſſes God raiſed up, to ſhew that he had "built his Church upon a rock, and the gates of hell ſhould not wholly prevail againſt her‡."

* Heb. x. 34.——xi. 37, &c. † 2 Cor. vi. 4, &c.
‡ Matt. xvi. 18.

III. 1. But

III. 1. But ſhall we not ſee greater things than theſe? Yea, greater than have been yet from the beginning of the world. Can ſatan cauſe the truth of God to fail, or his promiſes to be of none effect? If not, the time will come, when Chriſtianity will prevail over all, and cover the earth. Let us ſtand a little, and ſurvey (the third thing which was propoſed) this ſtrange ſight, a *Chriſtian World*. "Of this the prophets of old enquired and ſearched diligently*:" Of this "the Spirit which was in them teſtified," "It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills, and all nations ſhall flow unto it. And they ſhall beat their ſwords into ploughſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation; neither ſhall they learn war any more †. In that day there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people. To it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall be glorious. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the Lord ſhall ſet his hand again to recover the remnant of his people: and he ſhall ſet up an enſign for the nations, and ſhall aſſemble the outcaſts of Iſrael, and gather together the diſperſed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth ‡. The wolf ſhall then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid: And the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child ſhall lead them. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy, ſaith the Lord, in all my holy mountain. For the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea §."

2. To the ſame effect are the words of the great Apoſtle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. "Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. But through their fall Salvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminiſhing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulneſs? For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery,---That blindneſs in part

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c. † Iſa. ii. 2, 4. ‡ Iſa. xi. 10, 11, 12. § Iſa. xi. 6—9.

is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in: And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved‖."

3. Suppoſe now the fulneſs of time to be come, and the propheſies to be accompliſhed. What a proſpect is this? All is "peace, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever." Here is no din of arms, no "confuſed noiſe, no garments rolled in blood. Deſtructions are come to a perpetual end:" Wars are ceaſed from the earth. Neither is there any inteſtine jars remaining; no brother riſing up againſt brother; no country or city divided againſt itſelf, and tearing out its own bowels. Civil diſcord is at an end for evermore, and none is left either to deſtroy or hurt his neighbour. Here is no oppreſſion to make even the wiſe man mad; no extortion to grind the face of the poor; no robbery or wrong; no rapine or injuſtice; for all are content with ſuch things as they poſſeſs. Thus "Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other*;" they have taken root and filled the land; Righteouſneſs flouriſhing out of the earth, and peace looking down from heaven.

4. And with righteouſneſs or juſtice, mercy is alſo found. The earth is no longer full of cruel habitations. The Lord hath deſtroyed both the blood-thirſty and malicious, the envious and revengeful man. Were there any provocations, there is none that now knoweth, to return evil for evil: But indeed there is none doeth evil, no not one; for all are harmleſs as doves; and being filled with peace and joy in believing, and united in one body, by one Spirit, they all love as brethren; they are all "of one heart, and of one ſoul: Neither ſaith any of them, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſeth is his own." There is none among them that lacketh; for every man loveth his neighbour as himſelf. And all walk by one rule, "Whatever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them."

5. It follows, that no unkind word can ever be heard among them: No ſtrife of tongues, no contention of any kind, no railing, or evil-ſpeaking; but every one "opens his mouth with wiſdom, and

‖ Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 26. * Pſal. lxxxv. 10.

in

in his tongue there is the law of kindneſs." Equally incapable are they of fraud or guile: Their "Love is without diſſimulation:" Their words are always the juſt expreſſion of their thoughts, opening a window into their breaſt, that whoſoever deſires may look into their hearts, and ſee that only love and God are there.

6. Thus, where "the Lord God omnipotent taketh to himſelf his mighty power, and reigneth, doth he ſubdue all things to himſelf;" cauſe every heart to overflow with love, and fill every mouth with praiſe. "Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people who have the Lord for their God*. Ariſe, ſhine, (ſaith the Lord) for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. Thou haſt known that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the mighty God of Jacob. I have made thy officers peace, and thy exacters righteouſneſs. Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land. Waſting, nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls ſalvation, and thy gates praiſe. Thy people are all righteous; they ſhall inherit the land for ever: The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The ſun ſhall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee: But the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and thy God, thy glory †."

IV. Having thus briefly conſidered Chriſtianity, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the earth, it remains only, that I ſhould cloſe the whole with a plain, practical application.

1. And firſt, I would aſk, Where does this *Chriſtianity* now exiſt? Where, I pray, do the *Chriſtians* live? Which is the country, the inhabitants whereof are *all* thus *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* Are *all of one heart, and of one ſoul?* Cannot ſuffer one among them *to lack any thing*, but continually give *to every man as he hath need?* Who one and all have the love of God filling their hearts, and conſtraining them to love their neighbour as themſelves? Who have all "put on bowels of mercy, humbleneſs of

* Pſal. cxliv. 15. † Iſa. lx. 1. 16. —— 19.

mind,

mind, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering?" Who offend not in any kind, either by word or deed, againſt juſtice, mercy, or truth? But in every point, do unto all men, as they would, theſe ſhould do unto them. With what propriety can we term any a *Chriſtian Country*, which does not anſwer this deſcription! Why then, let us confeſs we have never yet ſeen a *Chriſtian Country* upon earth.

2. I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, if ye do account *me* a madman, or a fool, yet *as a fool bear with me*. It is utterly needful that ſome one ſhould uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech towards you. It is more eſpecially needful at *this* time, for who knoweth but it is the *laſt*? Who knoweth how ſoon the righteous Judge may ſay, "I will no more be intreated for this people. Tho' Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in this land, they ſhould but deliver their own ſouls." And who will uſe this plainneſs, if I do not? Therefore, I, even I, will ſpeak. And I adjure you, by the living God, that ye ſteel not your breaſts againſt receiving a bleſſing at *my* hands. Do not ſay in your heart, *Non perſuadebis, etiamſi perſuaſeris*: Or, in other words, Lord, thou ſhalt not *ſend, by whom thou wilt ſend*! Let me rather periſh in my blood, than be ſaved by this man!

3. "Brethren, I am perſuaded better things of you, though I thus ſpeak." Let me aſk you then, in tender love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs, Is this city, a *Chriſtian* city? Is *Chriſtianity*, *Scriptural Chriſtianity*, found here? Are we, conſidered as a community of men, ſo *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, as to enjoy in our hearts, and ſhew forth in our lives, the genuine fruits of that Spirit? Are all the magiſtrates, all heads and governors of colleges and halls, and their reſpective ſocieties, (not to ſpeak of the inhabitants of the town) *of one heart, and of one ſoul?* Is *the love of God ſhed abroad in our hearts?* Are our tempers the ſame that were in him? And are our lives agreeable thereto? Are we "Holy as he who hath called us is holy, in all manner of converſation?"

4. I intreat you to obſerve, that here are no *peculiar notions* now under conſideration; that the queſtion

tion moved, is not concerning *doubtful opinions*, of one kind or another; but concerning the undoubted, fundamental branches (if there be any ſuch) of our *common Chriſtianity*. And for the deciſion thereof, I appeal to your own conſciences, guided by the word of God. He therefore, that is not condemned by his own heart, let him go free.

5. In the fear then, and in the preſence of the Great God, before whom, both you and I, ſhall ſhortly appear; I pray you that are in authority over us, whom I reverence for your office ſake, to conſider, (and not after the manner of diſſemblers with God) Are you *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* Are ye lively portraitures of him, whom ye are appointed to repreſent among men? "I have ſaid, Ye are gods," ye magiſtrates and rulers; ye are by office ſo nearly allied to the God of heaven: In your ſeveral ſtations and degrees, ye are to ſhew forth unto us, *the Lord our Governor*. Are all the thoughts of your hearts, all your tempers and deſires, ſuitable to your high calling? Are all your words like unto thoſe which come out of the mouth of God? Is there in all your actions, dignity and love? A greatneſs which words cannot expreſs, which can flow only from an heart full of God --- and yet conſiſtent with the character of "Man that is a worm, and the ſon of man that is a worm!"

6. Ye venerable men, who are more eſpecially called to form the tender minds of youth, to diſpel thence the ſhades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wiſe unto ſalvation, Are you "filled with the Holy Ghoſt?" With all thoſe "Fruits of the Spirit," which your important office ſo indiſpenſibly requires? Is your heart whole with God? Full of love and zeal to ſet up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind thoſe under your care, that the one rational end of all our ſtudies, is to know, love, and ſerve "the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent?" Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that *love* alone *never faileth*? Whereas, *whether there be tongues, they ſhall fail, or* philoſophical *knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away*: And that without love, all learning is but ſplendid ignorance,

ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of ſpirit. Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and of all mankind for his ſake? Have you an eye to this end in whatever you preſcribe, touching the kind, the manner, and the meaſure of their ſtudies; deſiring and labouring, that wherever the lot of theſe young ſoldiers of Chriſt is caſt, they may be ſo many "burning and ſhining lights, adorning the Goſpel of Chriſt in all things?" And permit me to aſk, Do you put forth all your ſtrength, in the vaſt work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might? Exerting every faculty of your ſoul? Uſing every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermoſt of your power?

7. Let it not be ſaid, that I ſpeak here, as if all under your care, were intended to be clergymen. Not ſo: I only ſpeak as if they were all intended to be Chriſtians. But what example is ſet them by us who enjoy the beneficence of our fore-fathers; by fellows, ſtudents, ſcholars; more eſpecially thoſe who are of ſome rank and eminence? Do ye, brethren, abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in lowlineſs of mind, in ſelf-denial and mortification, in ſeriouſneſs and compoſure of ſpirit, in patience, meekneſs, ſobriety, temperance, and in unwearied, reſtleſs endeavours, to do good, in every kind, unto all men; to relieve their outward wants, and to bring their ſouls to the true knowledge and love of God? Is this the general character of fellows of colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, Have not pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit, impatience and peeviſhneſs, ſloth and indolence, gluttony and ſenſuality, and even a proverbial uſeleſsneſs, been objected to us, *perhaps* not always by our enemies, nor *wholly* without ground? O that God would roll away this reproach from us, that the very memory of it might periſh for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately conſecrated to God, called to *miniſter in holy things*. Are we then patterns to the reſt, "in word, in converſation, in charity; in ſpirit, in faith, in purity*?" Is there written on our forehead, and on our heart,

* 1. Tim. iv. 12.

holineſs

holineſs to the Lord? From what motives did we enter upon this office? Was it indeed with a ſingle eye "to ſerve God, truſting that we were inwardly "moved by the Holy Ghoſt, to take upon us this "miniſtration, for the promoting of his Glory, and "the edifying of his people? And have we clearly "determined, by God's grace, to give ourſelves "wholly to this office? Do we forſake and ſet "aſide, as much as in us lies, all worldly cares and "ſtudies? Do we apply ourſelves wholly to this "one thing, and draw all our cares and ſtudies this "way?" Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others alſo? Do we know God? Do we know Jeſus Chriſt? Hath God *revealed his Son in us*? And hath he *made us able miniſters of the New-covenant*? Where then are *the ſeals of our apoſtleſhip*? Who *that were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, have been quickened by our word? Have we a burning zeal to ſave ſouls from death, ſo that for their ſake we often forget even to eat our bread? Do we ſpeak plain, "by manifeſtation of the Truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God*?" Are we dead to the world, and the things of the world, "laying up all our treaſure in heaven?" "Do we lord it over God's heritage?" Or are we the leaſt, *the ſervants of all*? When we bear the reproach of Chriſt, Does it ſit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are "ſmitten on the one cheek," Do we reſent it? Are we impatient of affronts? Or do we "turn the other alſo; not reſiſting the evil, but overcoming evil with good?" Have we a bitter zeal, inciting us to ſtrive ſharply and paſſionately with them that are out of the way? Or is our zeal the flame of love, ſo as to direct all our words with ſweetneſs, lowlineſs, and meekneſs of wiſdom?

9. Once more, What ſhall we ſay concerning the youth of this place? Have you either the form or the power of Chriſtian godlineſs? Are you humble, teachable, adviſeable; or ſtubborn, ſelf-willed, heady and high-minded? Are you obedient to your

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

ſuperiors

ſuperiors as to parents? Or do you deſpiſe thoſe to whom you owe the tendereſt reverence? Are you diligent in your eaſy buſineſs, purſuing your ſtudies with all your ſtrength? Do you redeem the time, crowding as much work into every day, as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conſcious to yourſelves, that you waſte away day after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Chriſtianity, or in gaming, or in --- you know not what? Are you better managers of your fortune than of your time? Do you, out of principle, take care to "owe no man any thing?" Do you "remember the ſabbath day to keep it holy;" to ſpend it in the more immediate worſhip of God? When you are in his houſe, Do you conſider that God is there? Do you behave, "as ſeeing Him that is inviſible?" Do you know how to "poſſeſs your bodies, in ſanctification and honour?" Are not drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs found among you? Yea, Are there not of you, who "glory in their ſhame?" Do not many of you "take the name of God in vain," perhaps habitually, without either remorſe or fear? Yea, Are there not a multitude of you that are forſworn? I fear, a ſwiftly-increaſing multitude. Be not ſurpriſed, brethren, before God and this congregation, I own myſelf to have been of that number; ſolemnly ſwearing to *obſerve all thoſe cuſtoms*, which I then knew nothing of; *and thoſe ſtatutes* which I did not ſo much as read over, either then, or for ſome years after. What is perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a weight of ſin, yea, ſin of no common dye, lieth upon us! And does not the *Moſt High regard it*?

10. May it not be one of the conſequences of this, that ſo many of you are a generation of *triflers*; Triflers with God, with one another, and with your own ſouls? For how few of you ſpend, from one week to another, a ſingle hour in private prayer? How few have any thought of God, in the general tenor of your converſation? Who of you is, in any degree, acquainted with the work of his Spirit, his ſupernatural work in the ſouls of men? Can you bear, unleſs now and then, in a church, any

talk

talk of the Holy Ghoſt? Would you not take it for granted, if one began ſuch a converſation, that it was either *hypocriſy* or *enthuſiaſm*? In the name of the Lord God almighty, I aſk, What religion are *you* of? Even the talk of Chriſtianity, ye cannot, will not bear. O my brethren! What a *Chriſtian* City is this? "It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand!"

11. For indeed, what probability, what poſſibility rather, (ſpeaking after the manner of men) is there that *Chriſtianity*, *Scriptural Chriſtianity*, ſhould be again the religion of this place? That all orders of men among us ſhould ſpeak, and live as men *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*? By whom ſhould this *Chriſtianity* be reſtored? By thoſe that are in authority? Are you convinced then, that this is *Scriptural Chriſtianity*? Are you deſirous it ſhould be reſtored? And do ye not count your fortune, liberty, life, dear unto yourſelves, ſo ye may be inſtrumental in the reſtoring it? But ſuppoſe ye have this deſire, who hath any power proportioned to the effect? Perhaps ſome of you have made a few faint attempts? but with how ſmall ſucceſs? Shall *Chriſtianity* then be reſtored by young, unknown, inconſiderable men? I know not whether ye yourſelves could ſuffer it. Would not ſome of you cry out, "Young man, in ſo doing thou reproacheſt us?" But there is no danger of your being put to the proof; ſo hath *iniquity overſpread us like a flood*. Whom then ſhall God ſend? The famine, the peſtilence, (the laſt meſſengers of God to a guilty land,) or the ſword? *The armies of the* Romiſh *aliens*, to *reform* us into our firſt love? Nay, *rather let us fall into thy hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the hand of man.*

Lord, ſave or we periſh! Take us out of the mire, that we ſink not! O help us againſt theſe enemies, for vain is the help of man. Unto thee, all things are poſſible. According to the greatneſs of thy power, preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die; and preſerve us in the manner that ſeemeſt thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt.

FINIS.